United Nations

Daily Highlights

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THURSDAY HIGHLIGHTS

+ Secretary-General, in report to Security Council, warns that situation in Tajikistan could threaten peace and security in Central Asia; proposes three-month extension to mandate of Special Envoy and United Nations team there; considers establishment of multifaceted United Nations presence.

+ Secretary-General informs Security Council that United Nations now has operational capability for use of air power to support UNPROFOR in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

+ Special Representative for Somalia says active and adequate United Nations presence is needed to achieve peace and security in country; comprehensive disarmament operation to be undertaken in Mogadishu in coming months.

+ UNHCR says 46 patients in Sarajevo are to be evacuated to other countries over the weekend; plans underway to estimate need for medical evacuations from other parts of country.

+ Seventh United Nations European NGO Symposium on the Question of Palestine to be held in Vienna from 23 to 24 August in Vienna, on theme of "The Middle East peace process; Palestinian rights and development -- a challenge to Europe".

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Warning that the situation in Tajikistan could become a major threat to peace and security in Central Asia and beyond, Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali has proposed that the mandate of his Special Envoy to that country and of the small team of United Nations officials there be extended by a further three months.

In a report to the Security Council dated 16 August, the Secretary-General said that because of the escalating crisis on the Tajik-Afghan border, he had asked his Special Envoy to visit Kabul for discussions with Afghan Government leaders on his mandate in Tajikistan, and

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to ascertain the views of Tajik opposition leaders residing there. The Secretary-General said further bloodshed in Tajikistan could only be avoided by peaceful reconciliation with the widest possible participation of all political groups and all regions of the country.

Stressing the country's need for humanitarian and development assistance, he said he would discuss with the Government and relevant agencies how best to organize a multifaceted United Nations presence to provide that support.

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Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali yesterday informed the President of the Security Council that the United Nations now has the operational capability for the use of air power in support of the United Nations Protection Force (UNPROFOR) in Bosnia and Herzegovina, according to a United Nations spokesman. Everything was now in place, he said, should the Secretary-General decide to use air power, on the advice of Special Representative Thorvald Stoltenberg and in consultation with the Security Council.

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The Secretary-General's Special Representative for Somalia, Jonathan Howe, today said that the only way to achieve peace and security in the country was with the active presence of adequate United Nations forces. In a message to the Somali people, Admiral Howe stressed that the United Nations Operation in Somalia (UNOSOM II) had unprecedented powers mandated by the Security Council and was supported by the world community, with 70 nations contributing civilian staff and 27 contributing military forces.

The Special Representative said the vast arsenal of weapons in the hands of militias, bandits and other elements must be brought under control, the country must be freed of mines and the institutions of justice, law and order must be given new life. In order to improve security throughout Somalia, the following disarmament operations would be carried out over the next few months: the first stages of cooperative disarmament in the Northeast and Central regions; the first stages of militia demobilization in the Northwest; preparation for militia disarmament under the Jubbaland/Kismayo Peace Accord; and the comprehensive disarmament of Mogadishu.

This was the third in a series of messages delivered by the Special Representative to the Somali people since 1 July, outlining political, humanitarian and security objectives of UNOSOM II.

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A spokesman for the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) said today that the condition of 80 patients in Sarajevo had been evaluated and that 46 of them required evacuation. The next evacuation flights will begin over the weekend and will take patients variously to Ireland, Netherlands, Canada or Italy.

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The spokesman said that a total 1,447 beds had been offered by 17 countries for the ill and injured in Bosnia and Herzegovina. UNHCR was now also considering requirements for medical evacuations from places outside Sarajevo, in such areas as central Bosnia, Mostar and the east.

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The current situation in the occupied Palestinian territories and the future strategies of European non-governmental organizations involved in Palestinian issues will be among the topics discussed at the Seventh United Nations European NGO Symposium on the Question of Palestine from 23 to 24 August in Vienna. The theme of this year's symposium is "The Middle East peace process; Palestinian rights and development -- a challenge to Europe".

The two-day symposium, organized by the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People, will be followed immediately by the Tenth United Nations International NGO Meeting on the Question of Palestine, which will take place from 25 to 27 August. Both events are being held in Vienna at the invitation of the Austrian Government.

It is expected that some 200 participants and observers will attend. Invitations have been issued to European non-governmental organizations accredited to the Palestinian Rights Committee or which support its work. Governments and organizations have been invited to attend as observers.

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